



News Release

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Contact: [Julie Graham](#) Communications Office
[Donn Moyer](#) Communications Office

360-236-4022
360-236-4076

New state rules on pain management take effect today

Goal is to improve patient safety and reduce medication misuse

OLYMPIA — Health care providers in Washington have new regulations and guidance to help with more effective pain management. The new rules took effect today under a legislative requirement that five Department of Health's boards and commissions adopt rules for the management of chronic, non-cancer pain.

"This is an important step in patient safety," said Secretary of Health Mary Selecky. "The rules provide requirements and guidance on the use of opiate-based medications to manage chronic, non-cancer pain. They also encourage practitioners to become better educated in the safe and effective use of these powerful drugs."

In our state and throughout the nation, the growth in prescription drug misuse has caused an alarming increase in overdose deaths, hospitalizations, admissions for substance abuse, and other non-medical use.

Today's new rules only cover practitioners regulated by the following boards and commissions:

- Board of Osteopathic Medicine and Surgery – Osteopathic physicians and osteopathic physician assistants
- Nursing Care Quality Assurance Commission – Advanced registered nurse practitioners
- Dental Quality Assurance Commission – Dentists
- Podiatric Medical Board – Podiatrists

On January 2, 2012, new rules adopted by the Medical Quality Assurance Commission take effect for physicians and physician assistants. The [Prescription Management Program website](http://www.doh.wa.gov/hsqa/professions/painmanagement/) (www.doh.wa.gov/hsqa/professions/painmanagement/) has full details on the new rules.